

TO MAKE A GREATER CITY

THE CONSOLIDATION PLAN EXPLAINED BY MR. GREEN.

HE POINTS OUT THE ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED BY JOINING TO NEW-YORK HER SUBURBS—TO PREPARE A BILL EMBODYING HIS VIEWS.

The Municipal Consolidation Inquiry Commission met yesterday noon at the office of the President, Mr. Andrew H. Green, 214 Broadway. All of the Commissioners except Mr. Cathcart of this city and Mr. Greenfield of Richmond County were present. The Secretary informed the commission that a Commissioner had been appointed for Westchester and that he would probably be present at the next meeting.

President Green read a communication from himself in which he treated in an interesting and exhaustive manner of the matter of municipal consolidation from the standpoint of one who thoroughly believed it to be desirable. He said in substance:

"I had hoped to present some statistical exhibit of the general financial conditions of the various jurisdictions which it is proposed to consolidate in one municipality, statistics prepared by local Assessors and by the census officials. These have not been completed at a sufficiently early date to enable me to present them at this time. I expect to offer them at our next meeting. There are other aspects, however, in which it is quite as important that we should study the subject of municipal government in its relation to the people and their business.

"Of all the movements of our era, that which distinguishes it most conspicuously in relations which may affect society in every condition is the gathering of the populations in cities. Census returns of the last century make the exhibit that in the year 1790 3.3 of our population dwelt in cities; in 1800, 3.9; in 1810, 4.9; in 1830, 6.7; in 1840, 8.5; in 1850, 12.5; in 1860, 16.1; in 1870, 20.9; in 1880, 22.5. Estimating that the rate of increase indicated in the ninety years preceding 1880 has been maintained through the decade now closing, the conclusion is reached that at this day one-quarter of the population of the entire country dwells in cities. There is no reason to suppose that the movement will cease with this present apportionment between rural and urban populations. The causes from which it originated and by which it has been reinforced with passing years will continue its promotion with such growing vigor that there is every reason to believe there are those now living who will see more than half of the people of the United States residing in cities. The situation in which a preponderance of the people shall be dwellers within cities will open a new chapter to human experience and must necessarily modify in various ways forms and principles of government. It is the fundamental principle of our system that the majority shall rule. In an opinion delivered not long ago the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the City Government is a subordinate branch of the State Government and subject to such change as the Legislature may direct. Accepting this doctrine and accepting the doctrine that the majority in the State shall rule, it must be that when such majority is massed in cities the city becomes the State and is politically paramount.

"This view confronts cities more directly than ever before with the duties and obligations of self-government. It dispels what at one time was truth, but which with change in the grouping of populations has become or is becoming an illusion, that there is beyond the cities a conservative power in the rural districts sufficient to protect the cities against themselves. It more than ever impresses upon cities, not so much the privilege, as the obligation of self-government as well as the further consideration that there stands between them and chaos no saving power other than their own good sense. Until our cities have learned to govern themselves better than they ordinarily do, it is not desirable that they be clothed with authority unmodified by association with the rural elements, or too rapidly invested with that absolute power which majorities exercise with us over all their surroundings. If the lines of division between city and country be drawn upon the same lines which divide dense city populations from sparse rural populations, we accentuate by artificial boundaries the antagonisms which it is the part of prudence to moderate. A large city can with advantage be so extended as to have within its own lines the modifying element of rural space and rural population, thus broadening and shading off differences which become difficulties only when sharply defined.

"Of all the large cities in the world New-York is most isolated from rural association. Our narrow island, bounded on each side by the rivers which serve our commercial business so well, is hemmed in by natural moats more effective than any which military skill could construct. As if these natural moats did not suffice to mark our separation, we emphasize them artificially by statute declaring them to be the boundary of our political jurisdiction. We may bridge the river or tunnel under it, but we cannot bridge or tunnel through the artificial barrier of separate jurisdiction. The result is that the commercial metropolis is like a garrisoned town shut out by its defenses from all healthful intercourse with the region about it, to which its citizens only have access as visiting strangers, or on which they can dwell only by a species of expatriation from their field of work and of their livelihood on the metropolis. It is an unwritten presumption of our political code that a citizen is a voter in the neighborhood of his work and that his work is in the neighborhood of his home. Yet there are very many thousands of persons earning a livelihood here who vote elsewhere, and very many who vote here who have the tie of merely transient domicile and whose prospective homes are situated in other jurisdictions. The force of actual conditions overrides the influence of theoretical suggestion and produces a character of citizen who is a drudge in his field of work and a dummy in his sphere of citizenship.

"The simple remedy for it all is to consolidate citizens by consolidating their municipalities, thus obliterating lines of artificial jurisdiction to enlarge the area of a common municipality so that homes for the people may be put in the way of acquirement by all, to make the city where many thousand non-resident workmen find employment the city of their residence, and to modify the change in all government impending from the massing of majorities in densely populated cities by extending the municipal lines into rural districts, and keeping the dweller in cities ever in political touch with the country and the farmer. There are quite a number of persons on both sides of our East River who regard it as a natural boundary of jurisdictions, so definite and formidable that it cannot be politically obliterated, yet in commercial, social, and industrial view it is already practically effaced. The chief cities of the world are, as a rule, geographically divided, but municipally and commercially unified by rivers, they being the arteries of a common system.

"Thus it appears that where communities upon opposite sides of a river are under one sovereign jurisdiction it is rather an anomaly to find them administered by separate municipal governments. The separate relation of two adjoining greatest cities of the country, whose interests are so interwoven that for all practical business purposes they are one, is unaccountable on any other hypothesis than that it is maintained at the public expense for the profit of officials, or the hardly more pleasant explanation that our people are what may be called slow. The broader space formed at the confluence of the two rivers where they expand into the lower bay affords at times scant room for the ordinary business conducted upon it, for the aquatic sports indulged in by our yachts and rowboats, and the magnificent sea pageants with which we occasionally welcome distinguished friends or celebrate famous anniversaries. It is a water park none too large for the great cities which environ it. More than any other feature in all the prospect, it commends itself to popular affection, not only by its beauty and by the recollection of the animated pictures it ever presents, but from the circumstance that free from the measurement by the surveyor's eye, it has never been laid out plotted and apportioned into private lots and squares, but remains one and indivisible the common property of all.

"Staten Island has already felt the touch of modern enterprise. It will require but a few years to develop some special advantages to such a degree as to render her an indispensable auxiliary to the growing business of the port. The only portion of our territory situate upon the west side of the harbor, with an ample bridge connecting her with the main shore, and a tunnel projected to perfect communications with Brooklyn, with best docking facilities for sea traders of all the port, the future of Staten Island is assured beyond all hazard.

"Were Brooklyn situated at the water front of a great and fertile area occupied by a large and growing population capable of supplying her with all the elements of an independent commercial business sufficient to maintain a city of her magnitude, there might seem some plausibility in her aspiration to be superior to the conditions which have created New-York. Long Island is about ninety miles long and thirty miles in width at its widest section. This is the only territory geographically tributary to Brooklyn, and neither in extent nor in soil possesses any large sources of wealth or business. The city will continue to grow by the same influences by which New-York has prospered, and with their growth the two communities must come nearer together in population, in business, and in general characteristics. A policy which should aim to sever one at the expense of the other could not fail to be mutually disastrous. The present arrangement which permits the possibility of divided policies is in itself a menace to the prosperity of each city.

"The criticism has been made that the project of uniting the cities and extending the area of their joint jurisdiction commends itself to no reasonable minds and flatters only an irrational propensity for empty magnitudes. Were this criticism just, our community is the only one in history which has heeded it to the point of dwarfing our real dimensions under the sham arrangement of separate municipalities. There is nothing discreditable in magnitude of population. Within an area not larger than that covered by great historic cities, there is here centred a population, an amount of wealth and resources which constitute us the second city in the world. While there is nothing to forbid our claiming that rank, there is everything to impel us to assume it. Cities are the crowns, the signs, the factors of empires. Standing at the portals of this northern continent, its representative city to the people of the world, the field upon which are to be conducted the proceedings in which nation meets nation in commercial rivalry or in the various encounters which international contentions invite, the name of a great city is a tower of strength, and there is no good reason why this community and the country should not have the benefit of such prestige. In this regard magnitude is not a thing of vapory dimensions, but is a solid, substantial, and determining factor of which it would be folly to deny ourselves the use in important issues.

"There are some who set much importance upon the matter of a name for a newly-consolidated area. This seems to be frivolous cavil. There is but one historic, but one living name of general prevalence, which has been and is used to denominate all this region. The names of outlying districts are so obscure that their significance and location can only be revealed by expressing their relation to the great metropolis. Even the queenly city across the river, whose growing prosperity has made illustrious her name, owes its import to association with that of what may be called her elder sister. That of New-York, both at home and abroad, stands in high distinction among the names of American cities. It would be difficult to find an inducement which would tempt the suburban districts to part with the fame or fact of their contiguity to the great city, for by this they measure their importance and material worth. There is nothing new in the principle or process of municipal expansion. All cities of the world of any magnitude have resorted to it, time and again. New-York and Brooklyn have consolidated adjoining areas, built them up, and extended again into wider fields, always anticipating the coming of the people by making governmental preparation, while the districts included have been in every way benefited. We have had official experience in the matters of extending our municipal area, and have learned in a hard and severe school the lesson that the sooner the inevitable step is taken the less costly and more satisfactory it will prove.

"For fourteen years, from 1857 to 1871, New-York,

Brooklyn, and Staten Island were under a joint police administration, and from the year 1856 to 1871 they constituted one Health and one Excise Department. The arrangement was highly beneficial and was terminated by and because of the advent to power of that corrupt influence which found it obstructive to the historic pollution afterward consummated in New-York. All the towns and villages and cities which it is proposed to consolidate are offshoots of the first colony established upon Manhattan Island, authority for their establishment emanated there, and to these dependencies looked for protection and business. Guided by the record of our past growth, there is warrant for the statement by which all the members of this commission and all citizens who may give the matter a thought will be impressed that in the period of thirty years, or in a generation, our population will have doubled in numbers and in area of settlement.

"Appreciating in full significance the prospect which this law of growth presents to us as the situation thirty years hence, failure to make ordinary preparation for it can proceed from nothing but incompetence amounting to imbecility. A proper understanding of the situation cannot be reached until we learn to appreciate the fact that all cities grow and are maintained chiefly by domestic business; that foreign commerce, however potent and valuable, is but a secondary factor of development, and that New-York is first in the amount of foreign exchange for the simple reason that she is first in the business of domestic exchange and in the bulk and value of manufactured products.

"It becomes us ever to maintain for her this relation, and to assure it by keeping in fullest activity and capacity those communications with the interior which are menaced by enterprises for conducting the trade heretofore passing upon our lines of transport to rival routes upon lines remote from and independent of us. Some of the zeal which we manifest for the preservation and enlargement of sea approaches by which foreign trade reaches us can with advantage be directed to our communications with the interior by which come to us the domestic commodities which attract this foreign trade. National Administrations, State Legislatures, City Governments, Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade and Transportation, railroad directories, and all the powerful agencies of a vigilant and energetic press manifest a vital interest in the transportation of products from this port to foreign markets, but leave to the charity of railroad corporations the business of bringing to us from our interior these same productions. New-York, Brooklyn, Long Island City, Jersey City, and all the communities around the port have a common interest in keeping open to fullest availability communications with the interior, and this result and other common interests can be best accomplished by united effort and by forces directed, and, as far as conditions will permit, from one united municipality.

"Reviewing the entire matter in all its bearings, consolidation means no more to the districts proposed to be united than the formation of a partnership between an established and prosperous firm and the younger members of the family."

President Green's communication was listened to with marked attention, and the reading of it was barely concluded when Mr. Stranahan, the Commissioner from Brooklyn, offered a resolution providing that the President of the commission be instructed to draft a bill embodying his ideas upon the matter under consideration and to present it to the commission at the earliest possible day. The resolution was adopted, only one Commissioner, Mr. Veeder, representing Kings County, opposing it. Mr. Veeder explained his vote by stating that he did not favor consolidation. He did not want Brooklyn absorbed in New-York, he said.

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS.

CARLOADS OF TREES ARE COMING INTO THE CITY FROM VARIOUS PLACES.

The railroads are bringing many carloads of Christmas trees to this city, and the work of distributing the trees to the many establishments here and in Brooklyn, in which they will be put on sale, is giving employment to many teamsters. A great number of the trees came from points as far distant as Maine. Thousands of them grew in forests situated within the boundaries of Speaker Reed's district.

"I was down in Maine last Fall," said a gentleman to a TIMES reporter, "and was much interested in the operations of the Christmas-tree man. From one little town he shipped out about ten carloads of trees, each containing from 1,000 to 1,500, which he had cut in woods within five or six miles of the station. His method was to contract with owners of wood lots for the privilege of cutting off whatever trees he might find of suitable size, and his contracts usually specified that he should pay 2 cents for each tree felled.

"He did his own chopping, and, as he went through each piece of woods, left piles of trees at accessible points to be gathered up by his teamsters. In order to load as many trees as possible upon a car he bound the felled trees in bunches, putting on an average a half dozen trees in a bundle, taking pains to stroke the limbs the right way, so as to make the bundles compact and also to lessen the liability to breakage.

"He used flat cars altogether and fitted them with the tallest slide stakes that the railroad company would allow. One day while I was watching the loading I heard a small boy say: 'By gorry, I wish I wuz a-goin' where them trees is a-goin'; that's what I wish.'

"'I'd a darned sight rather hev what's a-goin' onto um,' said an old man who was standing near by."

DID HE ROB THE BANK?

BROOKLYN POLICE THINK THEY HAVE CAUGHT THE RIGHT MAN AT LAST.

With the arrest of three suspicious characters, who were taken into custody at the bridge entrance on Wednesday evening by Detective Reynolds, the Brooklyn police believe that they have at last captured the suave gentleman who some time since managed to steal \$5,000 in cash from the Twenty-sixth Ward Bank under the very nose of Cashier Spellman.

The three men gave their names as William H. Lind, thirty-three years old, a plumber of Paterson, N. J.; John Reilly, aged twenty-nine, a gasfitter, of Mount Vernon, and John Kelly, a steamfitter, of 300 Third Avenue, this city. Detective O'Brien of Inspector Byrnes's staff visited Brooklyn yesterday and identified Lind as "Sport" McKesney, who five months ago completed a six years' term for forgery. The detective recognized Kelly as a brother of Charles McCormisky, bank breaker. Suspecting that they might have had a hand in the robbery of the Twenty-sixth Ward bank, Superintendent Campbell sent for Simon Borkman, the bank clerk who had been engaged in conversation by one of the thieves, and he immediately picked out Lind as the man who called Cashier Spellman out of the bank. This is the man who, the police think, afterward sneaked into the bank and got possession of the money.

The three prisoners were remanded by Justice Walsh and were locked up while the police pursue their investigations.

JACOBUS KNEW ALL ABOUT IT.

THE MILLER CASE REVIVED BY THE ATTORNEYS FOR THE CROWN.

Since Mrs. Cornelia V. E. Miller was discharged by United States Commissioner Shields, and her extradition to England to answer to a charge of receiving the money obtained by fraud by the firm of J. M. Field & Co. was refused, the lawyers for the British Government, Marbury and Fox, have been in a state of mind.

They now do not hesitate to say that United States Marshal Jacobus knew of the arrival in this city of William Wadsworth Miller and his son, William Yates Miller, on the Sunday following Mrs. Miller's arrest. They say that her husband might have been arrested at the time and should have been arrested.

United States Marshal Jacobus admits that he was at the dock when the two men arrived on La Bourgogne, but he was there from curiosity. He had no warrant to arrest the Millers, nor had he received notice from the British Government to do so. It would not have been proper for him to have done so, and he would have been liable to his bondsmen if any prosecution had arisen from illegal arrest.

Strange to say, Inspector Byrnes's men, who had arrested Mrs. Miller, did not visit the steamer, and after seeing Mrs. Miller at a hotel (where, it is alleged, she gave \$157,000 to her husband,) Mr. Miller and his son left the city. The two Millers were also met at the steamer by J. J. Adams and Mr. Lincoln, lawyers for Mrs. Miller.

The counsel for the British Government in this city say they have traced the \$157,000 to a safe deposit-company's vault.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT CONTENTION.

The Gas Commission met yesterday and decided to readvertise for bids for the street electric lights. The new bids will be opened Dec. 23, and if an average price of 40 cents per night per lamp can be agreed upon, the commission will probably decide not to return to the use of gas, but to continue illumination by electricity. The original bids of the electric light companies were rejected because of the high prices asked.

The North New-York Electric Light Company, through J. J. Moore, asked the commission for the privilege of lighting certain streets in the annexed district. The company's system, he said, would dispense a light of 2,000 candle power. The Mayor looked on the application with favor, but Secretary McCormack of the commission figured that the scheme would cost about \$40,000 a year, whereas only \$34,000 was expended for gas in the same streets.

Mr. Moore disputed these figures and presented several petitions signed by residents of the annexed district who want the electric light. It was finally decided that the North New-York Company should be allowed to put in bids for the lighting, and if satisfactory they will probably be accepted.

THE EXAMINATION OF JOHN DHOAS.

John Dhoas, the Lascar cook who stabbed Capt. Lyall of the British ship Buckingham on the high seas, was examined before United States Commissioner Shields yesterday. The testimony of the sailors was that the Lascar had threatened to kill the Captain before the stabbing took place. They also testified that the cook had been lazy and did his work badly. The examination will be continued to-morrow.